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THE
UNDEVELOPED NORTHERN PORTION
OF THE
AMERICAN CONTINENT.

A LECTURE
DELIVERED IN THE COURSE

BEFORE
BELL'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE

FEBRUARY, 1856;

BY
J. L. SCRIPPS.

CHICAGO:
"DEMOCRATIC PRESS" STEAM PRINTING HOUSE, 45 CLARK STREET,
1856.

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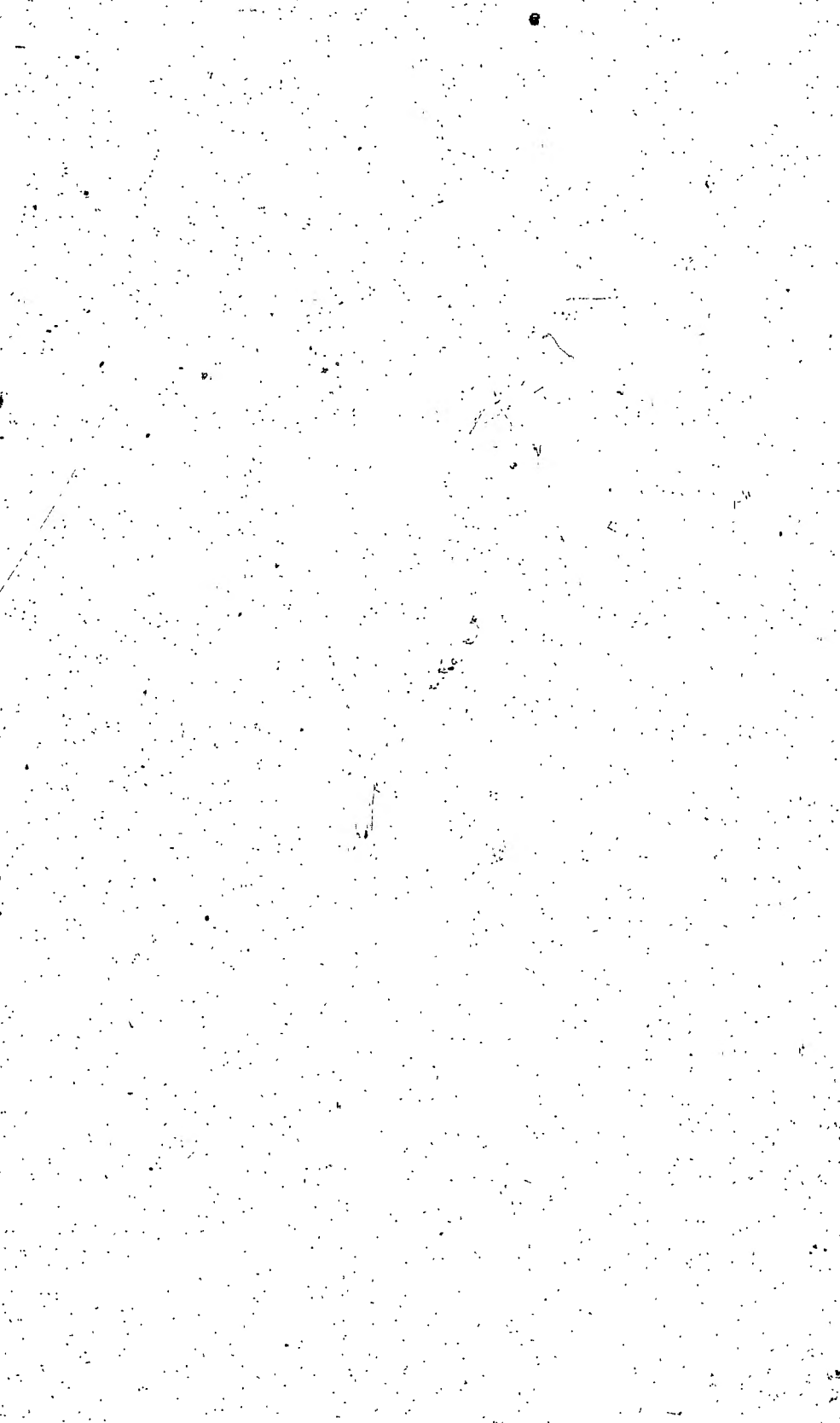
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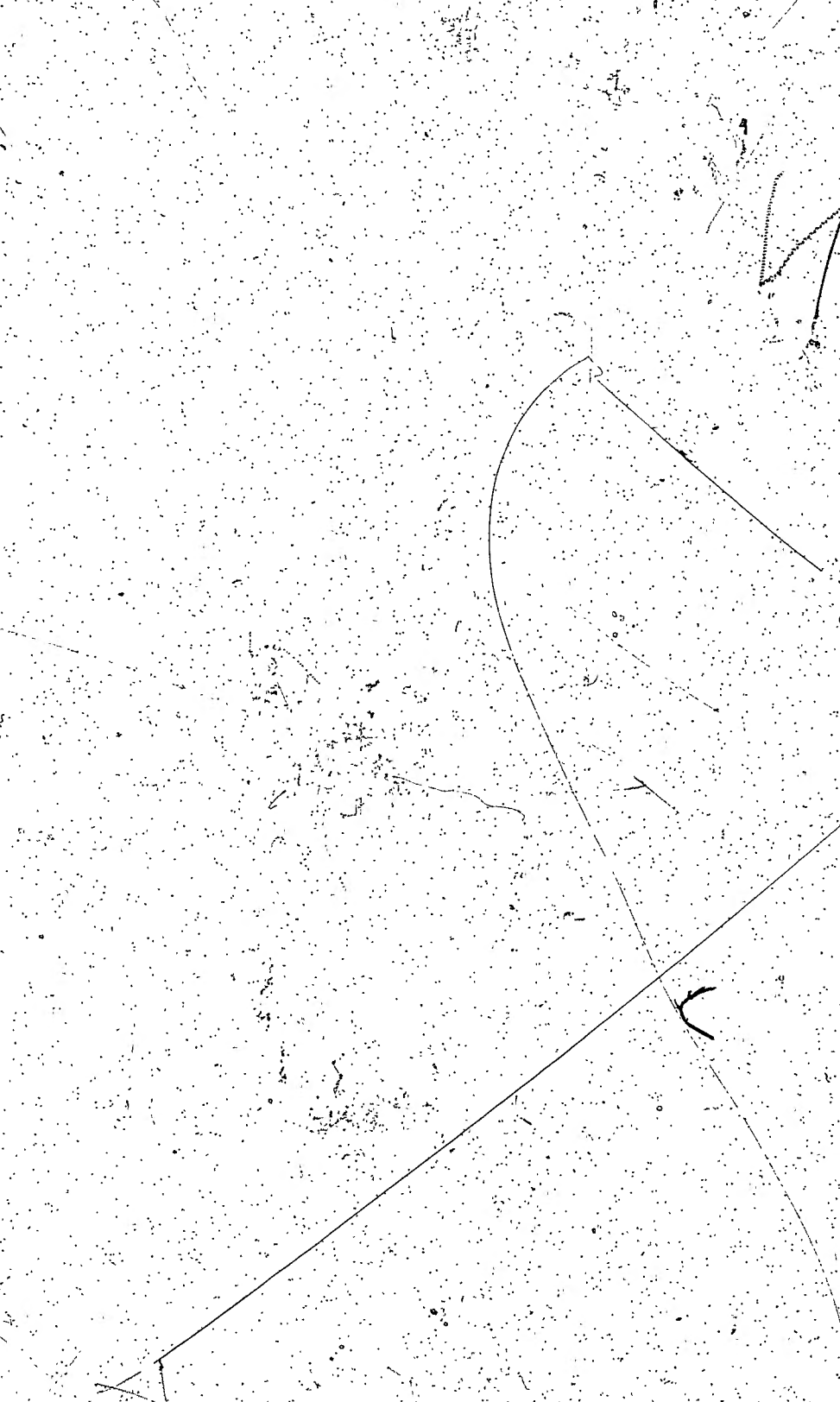
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CHICAGO, March 1, 1886.

J. L. Scripps, Esq., Editor Daily Democratic Press:

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, believing that your excellent lecture, delivered in the course before Bell's Commercial College, on "The Underdeveloped Northern Portion of the American Continent," contains statements and facts concerning this region of great public interest, especially to our Western community, would respectfully solicit its publication, as a means of extending the valuable information it embodies.

W. B. Ogden,

Thos. Richmond,

J. H. Dunham,

S. S. Hayes,

J. Young Scammon, H. T. Dickey,

R. K. Swift,

W. B. Brown,

Mark Skinner,

M. D. Ogden.

THE UNDEVELOPED
NORTHERN PORTION
OF
THE AMERICAN CONTINENT.
BY J. L. SCRIPPS.

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744 45, 747 48, 748 49.

before a powerful company was organized which the Hudson Bay Company was endeavoring to extend its operations. The latter claiming to have acquired the right it sought to exercise under the grant by contingency which has broken it down by Prince Rupert; the former on the right of discovery. The origin dates back to 1600, when France included not only the Canadas but that Charles II granted by royal charter to him extended far into the interior of the continent. French traders passed up the Lake Superior, and from the Western extremity spread themselves west by the Pacific Ocean and themselves out over the country westwardly, the French proceeded on the North by the establishing posts on the upper Mississippi, on the West by the Atlantic, and on the Lake River, on the Red River of the North, on the Assiniboine and the Saskatchewan to the mouth of the great Lake River. The English on the other hand, relied towards the setting sun. It is interesting to inquire upon inducing the Indians to come into commerce how very low an estimate they early their first on Hudson's Bay at the mouth of the English afterwards placed upon the dependence Nelson, the Churchill, and other rivers, south of the crown in America. Here was a free grant their fur and pelts, the product of a year's of over three millions of square miles of British soil, than depending on their traders of the bay, all of it rich in furs and fish, much of it in grounds occupied by the respective tribes. It was, however, in navigation around the Bay was a long while before the servants of the crown the French a territory in one of the prairie of the bay and penetrated as far north as Lake Winnipeg, and when they did, they found their rivals had prejudiced the Indians against them, drawn that it required to the pretence this state to such an extent that it was difficult to induce peaceful territorial major in perpetuity, and so then to trade at all. Throughout the long consecutive rights of trade without a forever. Of late times rivalry between the two parties, this policy the loyalty of the franchise has been denied, by was followed. Each strove to influence the but so powerful as the company at home, so much of the savages against the other, and each great its influence through its vast wealth and ministered to their passions and appetites to procure through its members and connections; that the private their good will. This contest was carried question has never yet been brought before the court with varied fortune to either party until the courts for adjudication. In those days, the cessation of Canada to England in 1763, when the geographical knowledge was very limited, and French traders entirely withdrawn from the continent. The idea of a Northwestern Passage to try.

the Pacific possessed the minds of the cultivated classes, and the probable discovery of such a passage through the water flowing into Hudson's Bay was made one of the feasible rail, before another class of traders took their ground on which the grant was issued to Prince Rupert and his associates. Undoubtedly there were political and family reasons at the back of it, the first appearance of the conquerors of Canada charter, but the King had sufficient grounds upon the waters of Lake Superior in the evidence not to thrust them upon the attention of party of traders was in 1766—three years after his subjects.

Organized upon this charter, the Hudson Bay traders were mostly of Scotch origin. To a Company has maintained an active and profitable shrewdness in business, which is proverbial of its existence for nearly two centuries. Enthroned the Scotch people, they united an enterprise, a in military grandeur, for most of the time, in the spirit of adventure, a boldness in pursuit of French North, it soon grew into a despotism, more gain, and an indomitable perseverance and energy than the climate. Its imperious edicts before which all obstacles melted away. There have always been the only law of its numerous Scotchmen from Canada entered single-handedly, and it has ruled with equal determination upon the broad field, in direct competition with the Indian tribes which have contributed to the powerful company of the North. Individual enterprise opened the way and carried

The French traders from Canada, after they threshold, energetic men as far westward as the were driven from Hudson's Bay by their more powerful rival, sought a new channel of trade by ward towards the principal seat of the Hudson way of the Lakes with the same country over Bay Company than their predecessors had ven-

tured to go. But circumstances soon conspired the whole subject was brought before Parliament to drive them into an association of capital and and resulted in a compromise by which the two of effort. The English, finding them more dan- companies were united under the title of "Hon- gerous rivals than the French had been, became ORABLE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY," since which suddenly conscious of the danger of losing the time the only competition met with has come best portion of the trade of which they had ex- from the American Fur Company, whose opera- pected to enjoy the entire monopoly, and com- tions have been conducted south of the parallel menced pushing out their posts to the south and of 49 North latitude.

The magnitude of the operations of these two companies was enormous. From a work en- titled Mackenzie's Voyages, published in London in 1801, we learn something of the business of the Northwestern Company in the earlier period of its existence. In 1788—four years after its organization—the gross value of the adventure of the year amounted to \$200,000. In 1795 it had reached more than \$600,000, and afterwards a still larger sum. In reading this book I was forcibly reminded of the wonderful improvement in facilities of transit, both in navigation and land carriage, which have come into general use since it was written. Here is an example of the slow process of that day:

The agents of the company, stationed in the Northwest sent their orders for goods to Montreal in October. These orders were forwarded to London, and the goods were shipped the next spring, arriving at Montreal in the summer. In course of the following winter they were made up into such articles as were wanted for the Indians; they were then put up into packages of ninety pounds each, and shipped from Montreal in canoes in the month of May. The canoes thus loaded proceeded up the Ottawa River, crossed over to Lake Nipissing, descended French River into Lake Huron, then up the St. Mary's River, and coasting around Lake Superior arrived at Grand Portage, near the head of the lake. Thence they were conveyed by way of the Kaministiquia River, Lake La Pluie, or Rainy Lake, and Rainy Lake River, Lake of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan River, and so on across to Great Slave Lake, the Athabasca country and the Rocky Mountains, arriving at their destination early in the winter, just two years after the order had been sent for them. That winter these goods were exchanged for furs and peltries, which were sent off the ensuing spring, arriving at Montreal in the fall. From thence they were sent to Europe and sold, and the returns received at Montreal the following June—just forty-two months after the goods were ordered, thirty-six months after they had been shipped from England and twenty four months after they had been forwarded from Montreal. The world has moved

see how a "nimble sixpence" of the present day, when an enterprising trader may turn over his capital five or six times in twelve months, is

These circumstances were instrumental in originating a powerful organization in Canada, under the style of the Northwest Company, in the winter of 1783-4. From that date down to 1821—a period of nearly half a century—a commercial rivalry, fiercer perhaps than any that has ever been witnessed in civilized communities, animated the two companies, and whosoever, throughout the Northwestern wilderness, these two parties made their appearance, there human ingenuity, a native shrewdness rendered preternaturally acute by the emergencies of time and place, an individual courage nurtured by constant familiarity with danger, were all employed in carrying forward the plans of the one, and in thwarting those of the other, with but little reference to the agencies made use of to accomplish the object. Time will not permit me to give even an outline of this prolonged contest. Let it suffice on this head to say, that after a sanguinary battle between the servants of the two companies, at the settlement of Lord Selkirk, on the Red River of the North—an engagement in which the Governor of the Colony, Mr. Semple, and seventeen of his followers were killed and the remainder put to flight by the Norwesterners—and after Lord Selkirk, by way of retaliation, had captured Fort William, the principal depot of the Northwest-ern Company near the head of Lake Superior,

more productive than the "slow shilling" of returns and a small margin for profits." There can be little doubt but that the sole reason why the company maintains its posts in Oregon and Washington is to induce brother Jonathan to "shell out" liberally for them. My own opinion is, that brother Jonathan will let the company hold these posts until it voluntarily abandons them, unless, indeed, it will sell along with them the original charter to Prince Rupert. Jonathan would undoubtedly "come down" handsomely for that, without stopping to scrutinize very closely its legality.

The Hudson Bay Company's operations were conducted on a scale of similar magnitude to that of its great rival. Its supplies, however, were received from Europe by way of Hudson's Bay, and its furs were shipped by the same course. Starting from its forts on this great estuary, the company's servants penetrated the same region of country already spoken of as occupied by the Northwestern. If the latter pioneered the way in every instance, the former pressed hard upon their footsteps, not left them for any considerable time in the undisputed enjoyment of the trade of new regions. Thus, from the great Lakes on the east to Puget's Sound and the Russian Possessions on the west, and from the regions of the Esquimaux on the north to the Gulf of California at the south, have the agents of these companies traversed the country in every direction—crossing the continent with a fleet of bark canoes laden with goods for the Indians or with furs for Europe—making, with few and short portages, the entire distance from Puget's Sound to Montreal, or to Hudson's Bay, through a connected chain of rivers and lakes—on every water course within the boundaries designated, on every Indian trail, in every mountain gorge, on every plain, and in every forest, have the servants of these two companies appeared, stopping wherever the ascending smoke marked the presence of the natives, and bartering the products of European looms—the scarlet cloth, the flaunting print and ribbon, the tinsel ornaments and flashing gewgaw; so attractive to barbaric life—for the rich furs of the north, destined in their turn to minister no less to the vanity of those who dwell in the centres of civilization.

Connected with these long-continued and widely extended operations are incidents of romance, of courage and of daring, of endurance almost superhuman, of deeds of blood fit to appal the stoutest heart. All these are to be gathered up and embalmed in history, but the time is not yet. Some of them I had thought to present in my present discourse, but the subject has so grown upon my hands that I cannot.

The matter of the Hudson Bay Company possesses a special interest just now from the fact that President Pierce in his recent Message advises the purchase of its rights and property in Oregon and Washington Territories. It is understood that the company is anxious to sell. Its trade in furs is nearly closed in those Territories, and in the limited mercantile operations which it conducts there, whether in furs or other commodities, it comes in direct competition with the inevitable Yankee, whose motto is "quick

INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY:

I come next to speak of the population of the country under consideration. And first, as to the number of whites employed by the fur companies who reside permanently in the country. It is probable that two thousand would be a liberal estimate for this class. To their character and mode of life I have already made incidental allusion in speaking of the operations of the companies. Time will not permit me to say more on that head.

In the next place, wherever the various companies have established trading posts, a portion of their servants have intermarried with the Indian tribes. I have no satisfactory data by which to estimate the entire population of mixed blood. When Schoolcraft was sent out by the Government in 1832, to visit the tribes inhabiting the country around Lake Superior and on the head waters of the Mississippi, he found in those localities a total Indian population of 14,024, of whom 1,553 were of mixed blood, or a little more than one-tenth of the whole number. Further out in the interior the proportion is not nearly so great, though this class is to be found in considerable number throughout the whole area covered by the posts of the traders.

The Indians of the country are divided into many tribes, and are mainly comprised in the following:

The Ojibways, the Sioux or Dacotahs, the Muskegeese, the Crees, the Knisteneaux, the Assiniboinis, the Piegiens, the Surcies, the Blood Indians, the Blackfeet, the Flatheads, the Sautaux, the Chepewyan, the Beaver, the Dog Rib, the Strongbow Indians and the Esquimaux. These numerous tribes are undoubtedly the offshoots of about four distinct nations, or people, and may all be classified under the heads of the Algonquins, the Dacotahs, the Chepewyan and the Esquimaux. I estimate their entire number at about one hundred thousand souls. It should be remembered that the Indian population of the included region was formerly much greater than now. Various causes have contributed to a diminution of their number. First, the perpetual

state of war which exists between many of the chiefly for the benefit of the families of its tribes. Secondly, the introduction of ardent spirits, but incidentally religious and other inspirits by the fur companies; for notwithstanding construction has been gratuitously offered to the ing the organic law of both the Hudson Bay and natives. But throughout its vast domain, so the Northwestern Companies prohibited traffic far as man may judge, these efforts to Christianize ardent spirits, and notwithstanding the Americanize an uncivilized people remain to this day. The American Fur Company was prohibited by special without fruit, except in two or three instances act of Congress from selling or giving it to the in which agriculture and some other pursuits of Indians, still the fierce rivalry existing between civilized life have been taught them also. The these companies, combined with the known fact American Fur Company, I believe, has never that the Indians would trade with that party made missionary labors a part of its objects. which would furnish them the most rum, led to The Yankee traders were famous among the In- an open and shameless disregard of the law, and dians for mixing their rum with water—but I with the direst results to the Indians. But believe they have never secured much of a repu- the chief agency by which these tribes have been tation, either in the woods or among civilized cut down to a mere tith of their original number, people, for mixing business with religion. When was the small-pox, introduced among them by the Yankee traders, he trades, and trades, too, their intercourse with the traders. The differ- mainly to his own advantage; when he preaches ent authors which I have examined upon the he preaches. Yet American missionaries have subject are at a loss for language to depict the followed close upon the footsteps of the Ameri- scenes of horror, of devastation—the utter an- can Fur Company, and while they have accom- nihilation of whole families, and sometimes of plished more than their French and English pre- tribes—which followed upon the breaking out of decessors, still it is painfully apparent that mis- this disease among the Indians. On its appear- sionary effort among these northern Indians is a Sisyphian labor.

There is one remarkable instance, however, in which these labors have been crowned with suc- spread to neighboring bands. Others remained cess. This is a settlement of about five hundred moodily where the disease first attacked them, awaiting with Indian composure and stoicism a fate which they regarded as inevitable. And Cree Indians, on the Red River of the North, a still others, shrinking from the fearful agony of short distance below the Selkirk Colony. David Dale Owen, the eminent Geologist, visited this settlement of Indians in 1843, and I have copied from his official report to Government the fol- lowing account of them:

As to the moral and mental condition of these tribes but little can be said that would be pleas- ant to hear. It was part of the policy of the French traders to establish missions among all the tribes with which they traded. Such mis- sions were planted at the Sant St. Mary, at La- pointe, at Grand Portage, and as far west as the Lake of the Woods, almost two centuries ago, and were maintained up to the cession of Canada in 1763. But when the Scotch traders went into the country three years afterwards, with the ex- ception of some old French trappers who had married Indian wives and still remained, they found no one who appeared to have the slight- est idea of Christianity. The Hudson Bay Com- pany has generally kept up the forms of the Christian religion at its principal trading posts; and in some instances has maintained schools

They are decidedly the most civilized tribe which I have seen or heard of in the North. They support themselves mainly by the produce of their farms which they cultivate with their own hands. They dwell in comfortable squared-log buildings, erected, thatched and whitewashed by themselves. They are acquainted with the use of the simple farming utensils, and the mechanical operations necessary to keep their farms and houses in order. Each family cultivates from five to ten acres of land which is kept well fenced. They mow their own hay, and feed their cattle on it in winter. A few occasionally hunt during a month or more in the summer when their crops do not require much attention, but this is more for recreation than support. The remarkable change in the manners and customs of these people has been wrought mainly through the force of example, by Mr. Smithurst, who resides among them as Missionary. That gentleman is remarkable for his love of order and arrangement, and is devoted to Agriculture and Horticulture. His house is situated in the midst of a delightful flower garden, kept in beautiful order, with flourishing fields of grain and meadows in the rear. The Indians having continually before their eyes so pleasing and practical an example of the comforts of civilized life, as well as an illustration of the means by which they may be enabled to provide a support far more stable and certain than that derived from the chase, have gradually fallen into the habits of their instructor, and by degrees have gathered around their permanent homes, the implements and appur- tenances, and even some of the comforts and luxuries,

belonging to the establishment of the thrifty farmer. Sometimes they are accosted contemptuously by their neighbors, the Chippewas, and ridiculed as "earth worms" and "grubs," but they now resort upon them: "Wait till the winter sets in, and then you will come to us, beggars for our refuse potatoes and indifferent peas."

THE COUNTRY.

Passing from the population, let us consider now the country itself. And herein are we, as citizens of Chicago, deeply interested. For if there be to the Northward and Westward of us a country capable of sustaining large and flourishing communities, whether of agriculturists, miners, or manufacturers, those communities must forever hold relations of the most intimate character with us. Nature, by the interposition of the great chain of lakes which stretches Northward of us through seven degrees of latitude and to within two degrees of the southern limits of Hudson's Bay, has made our city the inevitable gateway to and from this country. Situated as it is upon the head waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and within striking distance of the navigable waters falling into the Gulf of Mexico, and having both railway and water communication with the latter, Chicago holds a position which enables her to collect within her storehouses the products of all the zones, and here they will meet and be exchanged for whatever Nature, Industry and Art may produce in the higher latitudes above us. It becomes a subject therefore, of no little interest, to understand what this country holds in store for its future occupants, and what inducements it presents to secure early settlement. In considering the matter of soil, climate, water, minerals, &c., I think I shall be able to dispel some erroneous impressions that prevail respecting it, as well as to present some facts and considerations not generally known to the public.

LAKES AND WATER-COURSES.

One of the most notable features of the country under consideration is the great multiplicity of lakes and water-courses with which it is furnished. It contains within it the water-sheds, from which nearly all the great river systems of the continent, west of those which flow from the slopes of the Alleghanies, derive their sources. If we make the western extreme of Lake Superior our starting point for a general view under this head, we shall find, after passing westward a short distance, a grand water-shed comprising many hundred square miles of area in which the following rivers, beside several others, have their sources. First, the St. Louis River flowing into Lake Superior and seeking an outlet to the ocean through the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence. This stream may in fact be regarded as breaking down the barriers of the head waters of the St. Lawrence. Secondly, an easy open pathway, a thousand lines of water

the Mississippi and a large number of its tributaries, such as the Chippeway, the Crow-Wing, the Minnesota, the St. Croix and others—flowing into the Gulf of Mexico. Thirdly, the Red River of the North and its tributaries, flowing into Lake Winnipeg, which lake discharges through the Nelson and Severn Rivers into Hudson's Bay. This grand water-shed, unlike all others on the continent which give rise to important river systems, is remarkable for being situated upon a vast plateau, instead of occupying a mountainous region. The sources of all the rivers which I have named are reached by a gentle ascent—just sufficient to promote drainage of the country and start the several streams upon their long journey.

Proceeding westward on nearly the same parallel of latitude we come upon another grand water shed situated among the mountains. From the peaks and spurs of the Rocky, the inevitable gateway to and from this country. *Cœur d'Alene* and the Cascade Mountains trickle down a thousand little rivulets which, collecting themselves in the deep gorges and canons, and receiving constant accessions to their volume, after much apparent fretting and foaming in surmounting the rocky barriers piled in their way, emerge finally upon the plains—some on the thither side of the mountains—some on the hither side of the mountains—a half dozen or more grand rivers, running in as many different directions. On the North-eastern confines of this water-shed the Columbia, the Frazier and the Athabasca. Rivers have their sources, the two former discharging into the Pacific, and the latter into Slave Lake, which lake has its outlet in the Arctic Ocean through Mackenzie's River. A little further south the Saskatchewan River, which discharges through Lake Winnipeg into Hudson Bay, takes its rise. Still further southward the Missouri, with its principal tributary, the Yellow Stone, and the Rio Colorado—the former flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, the latter into the Gulf of California, collect their head waters.

The concurrence of these two great water-sheds, with several others of a minor character, from which descend the chief rivers of the continent in every direction to the ocean, within the territory under consideration, most admirably fitted it for the operations of the powerful companies which have so long occupied it. By means of the ten thousand lakes, which occupy freely all over the Northern portion of the continent that is not mountainous—by means of the great rivers of the two systems and their innumerable tributaries interlocking with each other on the plains and among the mountains. This stream may in fact be regarded as breaking down the barriers of the latter into the head waters of the St. Lawrence. Secondly, an easy open pathway, a thousand lines of water

communication suitable for canoe navigation quite equal dimensions of Lake Michigan? It was opened from the principal trading posts with no impeachment of their general intelligence every portion of the country. Occasionally the to suppose most of them are not. Yet such a brigade of canoes would come to an impassable. ~~There has an existence~~ ~~Franchère~~ whose narrative of a trip from the mouth of the Columbia guarded such an obstruction of but small moment to Montreal, in 1814, possesses much interest. The goods or furs constituting the cargo, says of Lake Winnipeg—the lake to which were made up in packages of fifty pounds each, I add—that “it visibly yields in extent only to from three to six of which, in proportion to the Lake Superior and the great Slave Lake.” Its length of the portage, were usually a load for a southern extreme is on the parallel of 51°. Lake single person; taking this load upon their backs, of the Woods is also a large body of water, being confining it there with a broad strap brought nearly half the size of Lake Ontario. It receives forward and passed over the forehead, detailing its name from the large number of islands within two to share the burden of each canoe; they it, which are covered with a luxuriant growth would move off on a free lope, rarely slack of for a time. It forms part of the boundary ening their pace until arrived at the point line between the United States and the British of reëmbarking. In the same manner portages possessions. Without attempting to particular were made from the head waters of one stream to the next, let me close this branch of the subject by saying, that the region of country embracing onward by the most direct route until the braced between latitude 46° north and the 50th proposed destination was gained. It is a curious fact, and one which I presume is known to Superior on the east, and the Pacific Ocean on but very few, that there are numerous routes of the west is better watered throughout its entire water communication, with occasional portages extent than any other equal portion of the world. from twenty yards to eight or ten miles in length. So numerous indeed are the streams and lakes through the country we are considering, from that, according to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who the Great Lakes and from Hudson's Bay across spent eight years in that country as Chief Superintendent of the Northwest Company, the place the continent to the Pacific Ocean. Instances are upon record in which persons have passed was of rare occurrence from which a person setting out and proceeding in a direct line for eight from Montreal to the mouth of the Columbia or ten miles would not come upon one or the River, and *vice versa*, with merchandise or with furs, making the entire distance in the same other bark canoe.

Some of these rivers are navigable for a much more pretending class of boats than the bark canoe of the Fur traders. The Minnesota, the St. Croix, the Crow Wing and the Blue Earth, tributaries of the Mississippi, have all, I believe, had their capacity for steamboat navigation tested. The Red River of the North is capable of steamboat navigation for four hundred miles. So the Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine, the Athabasca, the Mackenzie, and perhaps other rivers of which I have not the data to warrant me in speaking definitely, have likewise a sufficient depth of water for steamboat navigation. In some of these water-courses a great many rapids, and sometimes considerable cataracts, occur, suggestive of the manufacturing establishments that will sooner or later derive from them the motive power to propel their machinery. Many of the lakes are also navigable, some of them for the larger class of vessels. We not infrequently find mention of those which are from ten to thirty miles in extent. There are two of very remarkable size. Are my audience prepared to hear, that not more than two hundred and fifty, or three hundred, miles northwest of Lake Superior there is a lake of nearly, if not

These streams and lakes abound in fish of the finest quality. Both the Indians and the Fur Traders rely much upon them for the means of subsistence. It is a singular fact, that all the great sea-fisheries are in the North. Not that fish are not abundant within the tropics, but because those taken in high latitudes, or in the cold currents which sweep down from the Poles toward the Equator, are far superior in quality to the fish of the tropics or those found in the thermal currents setting Northward. Lieutenant Maury, in his *Physical Geography of the Sea*, gives numerous illustrations of this fact. The same conditions appear to govern the quality of the fish in our Northwestern lakes. The Mackinaw trout are famous for their fine quality beyond those taken from Lake Michigan in the latitude of Chicago. The fish of Lake Huron are superior to those of either Lake Erie or Michigan; while the fish of Lake Superior are esteemed by epicures of far more delicate flavor than those of Lake Huron. By analogy, therefore, we should be warranted in asserting the superior quality of the fish which are found in the lakes and rivers of the high northern latitudes in which the subject of this discourse is situated, while the uniform declarations of independent explorers and

of the Fur-Traders, establish the correctness of the analogy.

SOIL.

But water, although an essential element, does not, of itself, make a country desirable for residence. Other considerations, as, for example, of soil, of fuel, of minerals, and of climate, must also be taken into the account to determine the question. But before entering upon these topics, let us take a brief survey of the extent of so much of this country as I hold to be well adapted to the occupation of a civilized people. Our own government, it will be remembered, once claimed up to $54^{\circ} 40'$, but finally "backed down" to 49° . On whatever side justice may have been, I cannot help thinking that, had our statesmen entertained any correct idea of the country between the parallels of 49° and $54^{\circ} 40'$, the subject would have remained much longer under discussion, and our present possessions, in all probability, would extend north of the boundary finally agreed upon. Taking the facts as we find them, the undeveloped area between latitude 46° and 49° , west of the lakes, comprises 357,000 square miles, or sufficient territory to make six and a half States of the size of Illinois. The undeveloped area of the British Possessions west of Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay, comprises 1,375,200 square miles—or sufficient territory to make twenty-five States equal in size to Illinois. Our own and the habitable portion of the British Possessions together are, therefore, more than thirty-one times larger than the State of Illinois. This computation carries us up to the 60th parallel of north latitude. Considering the extreme severity of the present season, it will probably occur to some of my audience that *this* is pushing the subject to an unreasonable extreme, but, from causes that I shall mention presently, when I come to speak of the climatology of the country, I shall be able to show that, in a very large section of the country, the temperature at the 60th parallel is quite endurable, if not positively agreeable.

It is the popular idea concerning this vast region of country, that it is "a waste howling wilderness," abounding in sandy plains, and everywhere unadapted to cultivation, both on account of its poor soil and its high latitude. But this is a mistake, as I shall show. It is quite natural, however, that such notions should prevail respecting it. The fur companies that have occupied it have always been opposed to its settlement. The presence of civilization in any portion of it would put an immediate end to the business of these companies within the district thus occupied. It was essential, therefore, to maintain the undisturbed possession of it to the Indian tribes which were found within it. There were two ways by which this might be done. The

first was to maintain a constant silence respecting it; the other, to spread reports prejudicial to it.

Each of these plans has, in its turn, been acted upon. Almost all the knowledge that is available to the public concerning the country came through these interested sources. Moreover, had the fur companies been inclined to report the country correctly, the fact that their line of travel was along the water courses and only occasionally passing across small portions of the country, from one stream to another, rendered it impossible for them to obtain full and accurate knowledge of it themselves. It is curious to observe, also, what erroneous impressions the early explorers and first settlers of a country form of it. I very well remember when the opinion was universal that the great prairies of Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Northern Missouri would never be settled save small strips of them, around the edges, in the vicinity of wood and water. I can well remember when the opinion prevailed extensively that the country upon the head waters of the Missouri and of the Mississippi were adapted only for the abode of uncivilized man. The first Americans who went into California in search of gold, reported the country as entirely unadapted to agricultural pursuits. We have lived to see all these ideas exploded. The immense prairies of the west are now justly regarded as the garden of the world. Immigration has poured up the Mississippi and its highest tributaries, almost to Lake Itasca, the source of that great river; a similar current is setting into Nebraska and Kansas and stretching away over the immense plains that border the Missouri. While California, the country so recently thought to be entirely unfit for agriculture, besides growing enough to support its own population, exported to New York and other places during last year nearly half a million bushels of wheat. Now, when I come before you this evening, and lay down the proposition, that a very large portion of the vast region lying between the 46th and 60th parallels of latitude, and between the Lakes and the Pacific, is susceptible of a profitable cultivation, that it is eminently adapted to manufactures by reason of its vast resources of water power, that large sections of it are rich in valuable minerals—and all this, too, in the face of current opinions directly to the contrary, I would have you bear in mind the interested sources from which these opinions originated, as well as the fact that very similar opinions formerly prevailed of portions of our own State and other parts of the country which are now considered as among the most desirable portions of the Union.

Now let us see for a moment what facts can be adduced, even in the present imperfect state of

our knowledge of the country, in support of the proposition just laid down. And in doing so, I will commence at the eastern limit and progress westward. The country bordering upon Lake Superior has become widely famous for its mineral deposits and extensive mining operations. For a little while after population commenced flowing in, similar impressions prevailed respecting its agricultural capacities to those which the first American explorers of California entertained of that country. The country was supposed to be too mountainous and broken, too many rocks on the surface, the soil too thin, and the seasons too short. But subsequent experiment has proved that none of these conclusions were correct. The finest esculents in the world are grown in that region. The grasses flourish as if native to the soil. Oats are a sure and large crop. The more hardy varieties of Indian corn succeed well. Add to this, that the characteristics of the soil are such that crops require very little attention beside planting and harvesting. Wheat has been grown at different points on Lake Superior; but it is now thought that the snows immediately upon the coast and on the highlands of the coast range, are generally so deep that this crop would be smothered. But this is no drawback to the country, since the prairies of Wisconsin and Illinois are near enough at hand to supply the want. Further west the snows are not so deep, and an excellent quality of wheat is grown in Minnesota, as well as all the other articles I have enumerated.

In Northern Wisconsin there are occasional strips of poor land—of country almost destitute of soil—sandy and arid, made up mainly of the disintegration of the lower protozoic sandstones. There are also occasional districts in which the surface is nearly covered with huge boulders, and others in which a great multitude of lakes abound, having low banks and swampy margins. Mr. Owen, in his report of a Geological Survey of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, advises Government not to incur the expense of surveying these marshy grounds. You will remember that this is, precisely the advice which the first government surveyors sent out to Michigan gave respecting that State. A little drainage will make the Lake region thus contemptuously slurred over and dismissed by Mr. Owen, one of the most productive and most desirable districts in Wisconsin.

Respecting eastern Minnesota, I need scarcely say anything; for its agricultural capacities are now well known and appreciated. It will be sufficient on this head to read a brief extract from the *St. Paul Pioneer*, respecting the country lying between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, of which but little has hitherto been known:

"The popular impression has been that the bulk of the fertile lands of the territory, are to be found in the river valleys; and that back of these there is no inducement for exploration or settlement. From reports continually reaching us we are satisfied that this is a great error. It is true that all our valleys—the Upper Mississippi, the Minnesota, the Cannon River, the Zumbro, and the Root River—are among the most beautiful in the world. Broad expanse of prairie, rolling and dotted with openings seemingly dotted by hand, so uniform, and regular is their growth; with a soil of great depth and richness; and ribboned at convenient intervals with clear and rapid brooks and streams, which tumble over waterfalls, and contribute to the health, no less than to the rapid development of the sections which they beautify; these valleys, thus fashioned and adorned, would in themselves, make Minnesota flourishing and populous beyond any other portion of the West.

"The remaining portions of the Territory are not, as is generally supposed, either uncultivable or barren. On the contrary, if we rely upon the statements of intelligent men, the high table lands which lie between our beautiful valleys, comprise qualities which must ultimately make them our prominent reliance for agricultural purposes. This is peculiarly true of the section lying between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. A friend who lately took a trip some thirty miles back from Chaska, on the Minnesota, has given us glowing accounts of this section of country—beautiful rolling prairies, oak and maple openings, and forests covered with the largest and finest growth of timber to be found in the West. The soil, which he took occasion to examine at intervals averaged from three to four feet in depth, and "could not," as he expressed it, "have been bettered by Professor Bage's himself."

"Some twenty-five miles from Chaska, he was surprised by the sight of a large neat looking settlement, to which the name of Glencoe has been given. It is located in the centre of a charming prairie, and skirted around by highland and forests. Coal, in considerable abundance had been found there, and our friend saw a laborer throwing out with a spade flint along particles, from a cellar which he was digging. The settlement was commenced last spring by a single family, and now every quarter section within a space of ten miles square is "claimed" by actual settlers. On his return, he met between seventy and eighty men, with teams and packs, going into that vicinity for purposes of settlement. So rapidly and quietly is Minnesota filling up in every direction.

"The description given us by this gentleman, we are assured may be applied with equal truth to the great body of country lying between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. It is a section of vast extent, large enough to form whole States of the New England size, and blessed with a soil strong and fertile enough to support the densest population."

Of the country lying to the northward of that thus described we have reason to believe that it is not of a very different character. When Mr. Schoolcraft in 1822 traced the Mississippi to its source, in Itasca Lake, he found the Indians cultivating corn on its head waters. At Cass Lake they informed him that the crop was always reaped on, that seed corn was preserved from year to year, and the crop never known to fail. At Red Lake, north of the 48th parallel, the traders assured him that corn was a profitable crop; and that it was grown there in such quantities that it was sometimes furnished to the posts on the

Upper Mississippi, and even as far east as Fond du Lac, at the head of Lake Superior. Franchère, whose work has already been mentioned, thus speaks of one of the Northwest company's trading posts on Lake Winipeg in 1814, north of the 50th parallel of latitude:

"This trading post had more the appearance of a large and well cultivated farm than of a fur trader's factory; a neat and elegant mansion built on a slight eminence and surrounded with barns, stables, store-houses, &c. and by fields of barley, peas oats and potatoes, reminded us of the civilized countries which we had left so long ago."

A very domestic picture truly, and we thank M. Franchère for limning it away out there in the wilderness for our information and gratification. A few days afterwards Franchère and his companions had their visions of civilized life renewed by coming upon another farm on Rainy Lake quite equal to the one they had seen at Lake Winipeg.

It is a well known fact that the Indians of all this region make large quantities of maple sugar, and it may be set down as an established truth, that the presence of sugar maple is a sure indication of a rich and productive soil.

Flowing southward from the highlands which terminate the basin of Lake Superior on the North is one of the loveliest and most romantic rivers upon the continent, bearing the beautiful name of Kaministiquie, or, following more closely the Indian orthography, Kaministiquia. Franchère was filled with ecstasy while contemplating the magnificent scenery through which this river makes its way. Numerous cascades and three or four cataracts serve to add the element of grandeur. One of the latter, Franchère esteems scarcely inferior in this respect to the Falls of Niagara. Nearly the whole of the Kaministiquie Valley is susceptible of profitable cultivation. Sir George Simpson, in his recent work, entitled "An Overland Journey around the World," speaks of it in the following terms:

"The River during the day's march passed through forests of elm, oak, pine, birch, &c. being studded with isles not less fertile and lovely than its banks; and many a spot reminded us of the rich and quiet scenery of England. The paths of the numerous portages were fringed with violets, roses and many other wild flowers, while the currant and gooseberry, the cherry, and even the vine were abundant. All this bounty of nature was imbued as it were with life, by the cheerful notes of a variety of birds, and by the restless flutter of butterflies of the brightest hues. Compared with the adamantine deserts of Lake Superior, the Kaministiquie presented a perfect paradise. One cannot pass through this fair valley without feeling that it is destined, sooner or later, to become the happy home of civilized men, with their bleating flocks and their lowing herds, with their schools and their churches, with their full granaries and their social hearths. At the time of our visit the great obstacle in the way of so blessed a consummation, was the hopeless wilderness to the eastward," "which seemed to bar for ever the march of settlement and cultivation. But that very wilderness, now that

it is so yeld up its long hidden stores, bids fair to remove the impediments which hitherto it has itself presented. The valley of Lake Superior, besides establishing a continuity of route between the east and the west, will find their nearest and clearest supply of agricultural produce in the valley of the Kaministiquia."

Further westward, the same author speaks in no less enthusiastic terms of the character of the country and of its adaptation to populous settlement. Between Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods he found a region especially favorable, as will appear by the following passage:

"The river which empties Lac la Plue into the Lake of the Woods is decidedly the finest stream on the whole route in more than one respect. From Fort Frank downwards, a stretch of nearly a hundred miles, it is not interrupted by a single impediment, while yet the current is not strong enough materially to retard an ascending traveller. Not are the banks less favorable to agriculture, than the waters themselves to navigation, resembling in some measure, those of the Thames near Richmond. From the very brink of the river there rises a gentle slope of green sward, crowned in many places with a plentiful growth of birch, poplar, beech, elm and oak. Is it too much for the eye of philanthropy to discern through the vista of futurity, this noble stream, connecting as it does the fertile shores of two spacious lakes, with crowded steamboats on its bosom, and populous towns on its borders?"

But I must proceed another stage westward to the valley of the Red River of the North. A colony was planted on this river about the year 1811, by Lord Selkirk, under the auspices of the Hudson Bay Company. It has remained there, with varied fortune, to the present day, increasing in population, in comfort and in wealth. The total population of the settlements is estimated at the present time to be between 7,000 and 8,000. The town of Pembina was originally the capital of the colony, but when the boundary line was run between the United States and the British possessions, it was found to be south of the 49th parallel. The Governor and the other officials, on learning this fact, at once removed further down the river to the other side of the line.

But, Pembina continues to be quite an important settlement. It has been organized into a county of Minnesota, and last summer, while on Lake Superior, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Representative from that county to the Territorial Legislature, from whom I learned many facts respecting the colony and the country. Churches and schools are organized and maintained in these settlements; and the society is such as you would expect to find in a community of simple-minded, industrious people entirely removed from the whirl and excitement of speculation and their follies and inanities of fashionable life. There are some eighteen wind-mills and two water mills in the settlements. Wheat of a very superior quality is grown there, as would undoubtedly be the case at most of the points of the Hudson Bay Company, in even higher latitudes than this, were there mills to

ground it. As it is, our tourists speak only of even more lavish in her gifts of soil than in her "fields of oats, barley, peas, and potatoes." channels of communication. The numerous lakes From all that I can learn of the quality of the Red between the Mississippi and the Red River are River wheat, I conclude that it is superior to any surrounded by a gently undulating country of grown upon the continent. The best Illinois, the most fertile character, and abundantly sown wheat weighs from 60 to 65 lbs. to the measured bushel with all the forest trees common to so bushel. The best Genesee from 50 to 55 lbs. northern a latitude. He traversed the country. Red River wheat weighs from 55 to 70 lbs. to the from north to south, a distance of five hundred measured bushel. Forty bushels to the acre is miles, and, with the exception of a few swamps, the average on new ground, and thirty bushels saw not one acre of unproductive land. The is an ordinary yield. The crop very rarely fails. soil, he says, is the black mould, several feet in So much I have heard verbally from citizens of thickness, with various proportions of sand sub- the country. Now let us turn again to our writers to give the necessary warmth. The valley of the Red River, which, as I have already stated ten authorities.

Col. Long, who visited this region in 1822-3, on his authority comprises 45,000 square miles, says agriculture is attended with success; wheat, he represents as presenting in its whole extent barley, millet, pulse, potatoes, and other cul- an almost unbroken level of rich prairie, inter- ury roots are cultivated. sected by heavily timbered tributaries of the

Sir George Simpson, whose residence as Gov- river, the main river. itself being also heavily ernor of the Hudson Bay Company is there, in- timbered on both banks with oak, elm, ash, ma- speaking of Fort Garry, which is north of the ple, &c. This valley, he says, is among the fine- uth parallel, describes the country as being, on est wheat countries of the world.

Mr. Thomas Simpson, of the Hudson Bay Company's service, in the "narrative of his and pine; that the soil yields forty bushels of discoveries on the north coast of America in wheat to the acre, and even after being cultivated 1836-37," says of the Manitoba House, situated about one hundred miles north of the Red River twenty years, yields fifteen to twenty-five bush- colony, that the "soil and climate of this place els per acre.

Sir John Richardson states that the vegetation equals Red River. Barley, wheat and potatoes in the valley of the Red River is similar to that yield in most seasons excellent returns. The of the State of New Hampshire. The former is lake produces very fine white fish on some of about five degrees north of the latter. its tributary streams; tolerable salt is obtained from saline springs, and the wild hop grows in many places in great profusion and of good qual- ity."

I have, in the preceding part of this discourse, read you an extract from David Dale Owen's re- port, concerning a settlement of civilized Cree Indians, who reside upon this river, to which I

now add the following remark by the same au- fertile region from two to five hundred miles thor: "The general agricultural character of west of Lake Superior were needed, it could be the Red River country is excellent; the land fur- nished, but the above will certainly be regard- ed as entirely satisfactory.

The principal drawbacks are occasional protract- ed droughts during the midsummer months, and from the Selkirk settlement, we strike the valley. freshets during the spring, which from time to of the Saskatchewan River. The Saskatchewan time overflow large tracts of low prairie. Its is an important stream, adapted to steamboat navigation, having its sources in the Rocky ed tenacious subsoil insures its durability."

The valley of this river is 300 by 150 miles in Mountains, and discharging its waters into Lake extent, containing 45,000 square miles—larger Winnipeg. The French, originally, and after- than many of the States of the Union. Captain wards the Northwest and Hudson Bay Com- Pope, of the U. S. army, whom many of you panies, established trading posts along the entire know personally—a native of Illinois, and son valley of both branches of the Saskatchewan. It of the late lamented Judge Pope, a young gen- is described as a most charming region of coun- tleman of fine abilities and solid attainments— try, fertile and well wooded. Sir John Richard- conducted an exploration into this country by son states that wheat grows finely in it, that it order of the Government in 1849. After stating ripeens well in the dryer limestone districts, and in his report that the Mississippi was navigable better in the prairie country; but in the latter it 400 miles in Minnesota; the Red River the same is subject to periodical ravages of the larvæ of distance; the St. Peters 120, and the Jume caterpillars. He adds, however, that this plague River, a tributary of the Missouri, nearly 200 might be lessened were the country more gener- ally cultivated, and—rocks and domestic poultry

encouraged. He also says that maize ripens well basca, Sir Alexander Mackenzie came upon many at Carlton House, a post of the Hudson Bay charming views, a description of one of which I Company, in 52° 51' north latitude, at a height transcribe:

"Within a mile of the termination of the portage is a precipice, which rises upward of a thousand feet above the plain beneath it, and commands a most extensive, romantic and ravishing prospect. From thence the eye looks down on the course of the little river, by some called the Swan, and by others the Clear Water and Pelican River, beautifully meandering for upwards of thirty miles. The valley which is at once refreshed and adorned by it, is about three miles in breadth, and is confined by two lofty ridges of equal height, displaying a most delightful intermixture of wood and lawn, and stretching on till the blue mist obscures the prospect. Some parts of the inclining heights are covered with stately forests, relieved by promontories of the finest verdure, where the elk and buffalo find pasture. These are contrasted by spots where fire has destroyed the woods and left a dreary void behind it. Nor, when I beheld this wonderful display of uncultivated nature, was the moving scene of human occupation wanting to complete the picture. From this elevated situation, I beheld my people, diminished as it were, to half their size, employed in pitching their tents in a charming meadow and among the canoes, which being turned on their sides, presented their reddened bottoms in contrast with the surrounding verdure. It was in the month of September when I enjoyed a scene of which I do not presume to give an adequate description; and as it was the rutting season of the elk, the whistling of that animal was heard in all the variety which the echoes could afford it."

"The River Saskatchewan flows over a bed composed of sand and marl, which contributes not a little to diminish the purity and transparency of its waters, which like those of the Missouri are turbid and whitish. Except for that, it is one of the prettiest rivers in the world. The banks are perfectly charming; and offer in many places the fairest, the most smiling and the best diversified that can be seen or imagined; hills in varied forms, crowned with superb groves; valleys agreeably embowed at evening and morning by the prolonged shadow of the hills and of the woods which adorn them; herds of light-limbed antelope; and of heavy colossal buffalo—the former bounding along the slopes of the hills, the latter trampling under their heavy feet the verdure of the plains; all these champaign beauties reflected and doubled as it were by the waters of the river; the melodious and varied songs of a thousand birds, perched on the tree tops; the refreshing breath of the zephyrs; the serenity of the sky; the purity and salubrity of the air; all in a word pour contentment and joy into the soul of the enchanted spectator. . . . How comes it to pass, said I to myself, that so beautiful a country is not inhabited by human creatures? The songs, the hymns, the prayers of the laborer and the artisan, shall they never be heard in these fine plains? Wherefore, while in Europe so many thousands of men do not possess as their own an inch of ground, and cultivate the soil of their country for proprietors who scarcely leave them whereon to support existence—wherefore do so many millions of acres of apparently fat and fertile land remain uncultivated and absolutely useless? Or at least, why do they support only herds of wild animals? Men always love better to vegetate all their lives in an ungrateful soil, than to seek afar fertile regions in order to pass in peace and plenty at least the last portion of their days?"

With which profound and knotty questions we must leave Mons. Franchère and the charming valley of the Saskatchewan.

The next most important valley westward is that of the Athabasca River, with its tributaries, the Mackenzie River, in latitude 60° 5' North, which flows into Great Slave Lake. This region, while barley, potatoes, &c., are grown up to 60° North latitude. At Fort Simpson, on the Macready quoted in a similar strain to their notices kenzie, in 62° North latitude, Sir John Richardson states that "barley is usually sown from the down one of the minor tributaries of the Atha-

Sir John Richardson says of the country in the same vicinity; that from Athy Portage westward the country, though deeply furrowed by river courses and ravines, and more or less thickly wooded, partakes so much of a prairie character that horsemen may travel over it to Lesser Slave Lake and the Saskatchewan. In the valley of this river Sir George Simpson encountered emigrants from Red River, moving with horses and wagons to Oregon; which fact indicates clearly the practicable character of the country. Indeed Sir George, in another place, mentions that from Carlton House to Bow River, about one hundred miles, he passed through a country very much resembling an English Park. The agricultural value of the Athabasca valley increases as it approaches the mountains, the rigor of the climate being more strikingly modified by the warm winds from the Pacific. But throughout its entire length, as well as in a considerable portion of the valley of Mackenzie's River, the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies have grown at their several posts, oats, barley, potatoes, pulse, and at some places wheat. Indeed wheat has been grown at Fort Laird, on a tributary of the Mackenzie River, in latitude 60° 5' North. This region, while barley, potatoes, &c., are grown up to 60° North latitude. At Fort Simpson, on the Macready quoted in a similar strain to their notices kenzie, in 62° North latitude, Sir John Richardson states that "barley is usually sown from the 20th to the 25th of May, and it is expected to be

ripe on the 2nd. of August, after an interval of until this class of men had been superseded by
 62 days. In some seasons it has ripened by the weather, and then the world was astounded with
 With Oats, which take a long time, do not the discoveries which followed. The same
 three so well, and wheat does not come. A class of men have occupied the iron and
 to maturity. Potatoes yield well, and copper-bearing region of Lake Superior, for
 no disease has affected them, though the early nearly two centuries, but the vast mine-
 frosts sometimes hurt the crop."

This takes us into the mountains and beyond
 into Oregon, Washington and the adjacent Bri-
 tish Possessions, of all of which I can only say
 that it is a magnificent country, producing wheat,
 and other small grain up to the 54th parallel,
 growing all the cereals, abounding in wood,
 water, fish, coal and iron, and doubtless other
 valuable minerals.

The route by which we have thus traveled
 over the continent has inclined in a Northwest
 direction; on which account the Northern
 portion of Nebraska has been avoided. This
 section I have purposely left for the last, because
 of the impression which generally obtains, that
 it is a barren waste, an arid desert, which must
 forever remain unpeopled, besides proving an im-
 passable barrier to all attempts to extend our
 lines of railroad across the continent to the Pa-
 cific Ocean. Time will not permit of a detailed
 description of this country. I will content my-
 self with giving you the observations of a single
 person respecting it, after a critical personal ex-
 amination. Mr. A. W. Tinkham, brother of our
 fellow-townsmen, E. I. Tinkham, Esq.—a civil
 engineer and a gentleman of superior ability,
 who held a prominent position in Gov. Steven's
 survey of the northern route for a railroad to the
 Pacific, thus sums up briefly the leading charac-
 teristics of the section in question:

"A good deal of the country is poor, ill wooded, and
 with a poor soil. There is no such thing as desert
 country or destitution of water any where. Still there
 is a great deal of country which is not promising for
 cultivation, and is not likely ever to be thickly settled."

And of this country produces grass, and
 is roamed over by the buffalo; and I should judge might
 be used in extensive grazing. But even in this, the
 most unpromising part of the route, at intervals are
 pleasant and fertile spots which will repay cultivation,
 as the valleys of some of the smaller streams—and be-
 tween grazing and tilling it will perhaps be profitable
 to occupy the greater part of the lands. It should be re-
 collected, too, that the country has been but very par-
 tially explored, and that the examinations will bring to
 light valuable lands."

MINERALS.

The subject of minerals must be dismissed
 with a very brief and cursory notice. Fur traders
 are not much given to explorations for min-
 erals. California and Oregon had been roamed
 over for a century or more by them—the gold-
 bearing streams and gulches and canons had little
 been traversed and trapped over again and
 again, but the secret of their untold treasures,
 lying almost on the surface, remained unknown. Mississippi, and it is not improbable that anbe-

—was left un-
 der its native hills, and it is only within the
 last ten years that the world has been made
 cognizant of its magnitude and
 richness. It is true, that copper had been
 known to exist on the margin of Lake Superior
 for many years previous. The Indians had some
 knowledge of it, and communicated what they
 knew on the subject to the traders. A large
 boulder of virgin copper was exposed to view
 upon one of the forks of the Ontonagon River
 by the action of the water, and this was talked
 of by the voyageurs and trappers on returning
 from their excursions to the posts of the respec-
 tive companies, and occasional notices of it
 found their way into the public prints. But this
 would probably be the present sum-total of our
 knowledge of the subject, had not the trappers
 and Indians given place to a class of men pos-
 sessed of the enterprise and requisite knowledge
 to trace up to their original sources these
 metalliferous formations, by the debris carried
 down the water-courses and by other well
 known marks.

We have the same evidence of the existence
 of mineral districts in other portions of the
 country under consideration that formerly com-
 prised our entire stock of knowledge relative to
 the copper and iron of Lake Superior. The In-
 dians from time to time have displayed metals of
 different descriptions at the trading posts,
 though they have but seldom declared the
 places from which they were taken. Perhaps
 they were not hard-pressed on this point by the
 traders for the reasons before alluded to. I
 must, however, do the Hudson Bay Company
 the justice to note a remarkable effort, on
 their part, to discover a copper mine, intimat-
 ing of which had been repeatedly given by the
 Indians. Mr. Hearne, an officer of that company,
 residing at Fort Prince Wales, undertook, and
 after two or three failures, succeeded in conduc-
 ting successfully, an expedition to the Arctic
 Ocean, near which the mine was reported to be.
 He found the precise spot designated by the In-
 dians, found some copper also, but not being pro-
 vided with the requisite means for prosecuting
 discoveries, returned to Fort Prince Wales very
 little wiser on that subject than before.

Some of the oxides of copper have been found
 in various localities upon the head waters of the

Representative in Congress from Minnesota, ex
Gov. Beven, of Washington Territory, under
date of June 2d, 1876, I find the following in-
teresting facts on this subject:

"Navigation of the Mississippi River close from the 1st to the 24th of November, and opening from the 1st to the 30th of April. Time of the Red River of the North open from 1st to 15th November, and opening from 1st to 30th April. I have never travelled from St. Paul to Crow Wing, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, with a single horse and sled, without a track, and have never found the snow deep enough to impede my progress. I have also gone from Crow Wing, beyond the head waters of the Mississippi, to the waters of the Hudson Bay, on foot and without snow shoes. I spent six entire months travelling through that region, and never found the snow over eighteen inches deep, and seldom over nine inches.

"For several years I had trading-posts extending from Lake Superior to the Red River of the North from 46 degrees to 48 degrees north latitude, and never found the snow any way so to prevent supplies being transported from one post to another with horses. One winter, north of Green Wing, was 47 degrees north latitude, whereby about six hundred horses and cattle were lost, and these died of my kind except such as they could procure themselves under the snow. Between the 46th and 45 degrees north latitude, the snow does not fall so deep as it does between the 46th and 45th degrees; this is easily accounted for upon the same principle that in the fall they have frost much earlier near the 46th than they do near the 45th degree. I say this to reference to the equator watered by the Mississippi River. Owing to its altitude the atmosphere is dry beyond belief, which accounts for the absence of frosts in the fall, and for the small quantity of snow that falls in a country so far north. Traversing the territory from Lake Superior to the Red River the entire winter with horses and men having to make their own roads, and yet with heavy loads are not detained by any snow. Sometimes, in great numbers, winter in the pine regions of Minnesota with their teams, and I have never heard of their finding the snow too deep to penetrate their loads. I have known several winters when the snow at no time was over six inches deep."

Hon. H.H. Sibley, of Minnesota, who has had many years experience in the Northwest as a fur trader, confirms the statements given by Mr. Rice. He further remarks that it is a peculiarity of that climate, that calms prevail during the cold weather of the winter months, consequently the snow does not drift to anything like the extent experienced in New England or New York. Mr. Sibley says he has never believed that railroad communication in that Territory would be seriously impeded by the depth or drift of snow, unless, perhaps, in the extreme northern portion of it. By Mr. Rice's statement, however, I would seem that the qualification given by Mr. Sibley to his opinion, is hardly necessary. Mr. Culbertson, an old fur trader, gives the result of his observation for twenty years of the snow on the head-waters of the Missouri River, as follows:

The average depth might be estimated at twelve inches, say from the first of December until the first of March; frequently, however, the snow does not exceed six inches. In the vicinity of Fort Benton, snows are

very much rain, and scattered over the longer than one month at a time until they disappear. The climate is good and similar to that of the Eastern States. The waters from the Yellowstone River are much more severe than now during high water drifting so that it is impracticable for the traveler to march through these streams; they, however, seldom last over twenty-four hours. There is never much snow drift deep enough to stop me on the way."

The fact that, on the head waters of the Columbia and the Missouri, and behind the spurs and in the gorges of the mountains, and away northward up to the 52d parallel of latitude, immense herds of buffalo and great droves of wild horses, pass the winter in good condition, living upon the grass which is not killed out, is itself sufficient evidence, that the snows of the region are not deep, nor the climate very rigorous.

Let the traffic on that head with the single additional remark, that as long as railroads can be operated in New England and around there lakes in the winter season, it is simply absurd to urge the depth of snow as an objection to the Northern route for the Pacific Railroad.

This long discourse must here end; although the subject is far from being exhausted. In fact, while engaged in its preparation, I was all the while painfully impressed with the magnitude of the subject, constantly realizing how utterly futile must be the attempt to do adequate justice to it in a single lecture. But I trust I have said enough to awaken an interest in that wonderful Northwest which stretches away from our city in almost illimitable extent, and which holds within it so much of promise for us and for humanity. That it will be settled and developed I cannot entertain a doubt. A hardy, enterprising race has already commenced a grand exodus from its former seats to these inviting regions over which we have been traveling in imagination for the last hour. Railroads will, ere long, penetrate the old solitudes. Agriculture, mining and manufactures will supersede the pursuits of the chase. Flourishing villages and populous neighborhoods will assert into being as if under the "enchanting wand." Cereals will invert her coronanda over the bartered land. The blighting hood of slavery shall never touch its greenward, but freedom of body and of mind shall there have its highest realization, and there shall American Civilization achieve its noblest triumphs.

From the Daily Democratic Herald, March 17.
'The Hudson Bay Company's Monopoly.'

Whoever has read the article upon the Underdeveloped Northern portion of the American Continent, the publication of which was completed in this paper yesterday, will not have failed to arrive at the conclusion, that the rights claimed by the Hudson Bay Company over a large portion of America are directly antagonistic to the interests of the included country, and that if that great monopoly shall be left much longer in the undisturbed possession of its quasi title, it will be at the expense of the rights of humanity. It was stated in that article that the validity of the company's charter had been called in question of late years, but that through the influence of wealth, of numbers, and of individual connections at home, it had been able to prevent adjudication upon the subject. A recent exhibition of its power, to the extent even of controlling a grave interest of the British Government, is fresh in the public mind. We allude to the compact

tered into by the Company with the Government of the Russian Possessions in America.

By special agreement the Hudson Bay Company, several years ago, established a number of trading posts within the Russian Possessions. When the war between Russia and the Allies commenced, these posts, as well as some others in the neighborhood of the Russian Possessions, were at the mercy of the Russian authorities; while the Russian Possessions were at the mercy of the Allies. In this state of the case the Hudson Bay Company entered into a compact with the Governor of Russian America by which the rights of each were mutually guaranteed during the progress of the war. The possessions of the Company which were endangered amounted to only a few thousand dollars. The value of Russian America to the Allies it would be difficult to estimate. But such was the power of the Hudson Bay Company at home, that the Government of Great Britain acquiesced in the arrangement. The splendid fleet of French and English ships sent into the Pacific for the express purpose, doubtless, of seizing upon Russian America, was diverted from its destination, and crossing over to the bleak coast of Kamtschatka made a descent upon the insignificant Russian post of Petropavlovski, the possession of which was of no earthly consequence whatever to the Allies.

There is something in this procedure entirely inexplicable to us in the present state of our information. Why the interests of a company, consisting of only some two hundred and fifty persons, should have been thus regarded by the Government of Great Britain, while its own interests, of infinitely greater magnitude, were unhesitatingly sacrificed, can only be accounted for on the hypothesis that there is something beneath the surface which the parties interested would not willingly have divulged. A writer in the *Montreal Gazette* estimates the probable loss to the Hudson Bay Company at from ten to twenty thousand pounds, had the English Government refused to sanction the compact. Had there not been some other cause than is patent upon the surface of the transaction, Great Britain would undoubtedly have indemnified the Company for its loss, and have seized upon the nine hundred thousand square miles of territory belonging to Russia, with its arsenals, towns, etc.

But our object in this article was mainly to call attention to the attitude in which the Government of Great Britain stands before the world in tolerating any longer the existence of the Hudson Bay Company. Here is an immense habitable domain, possessed of great natural resources, and eminently adapted to the abode of civilized communities, kept securely locked against settlement by a few individuals, whose original right there is more than questionable, and which right is said to have been forfeited again and again, if it were valid. And this is done through the agency of the government whose interests all seem to be upon the side of the speedy settlement and development of the country claimed by the Company.

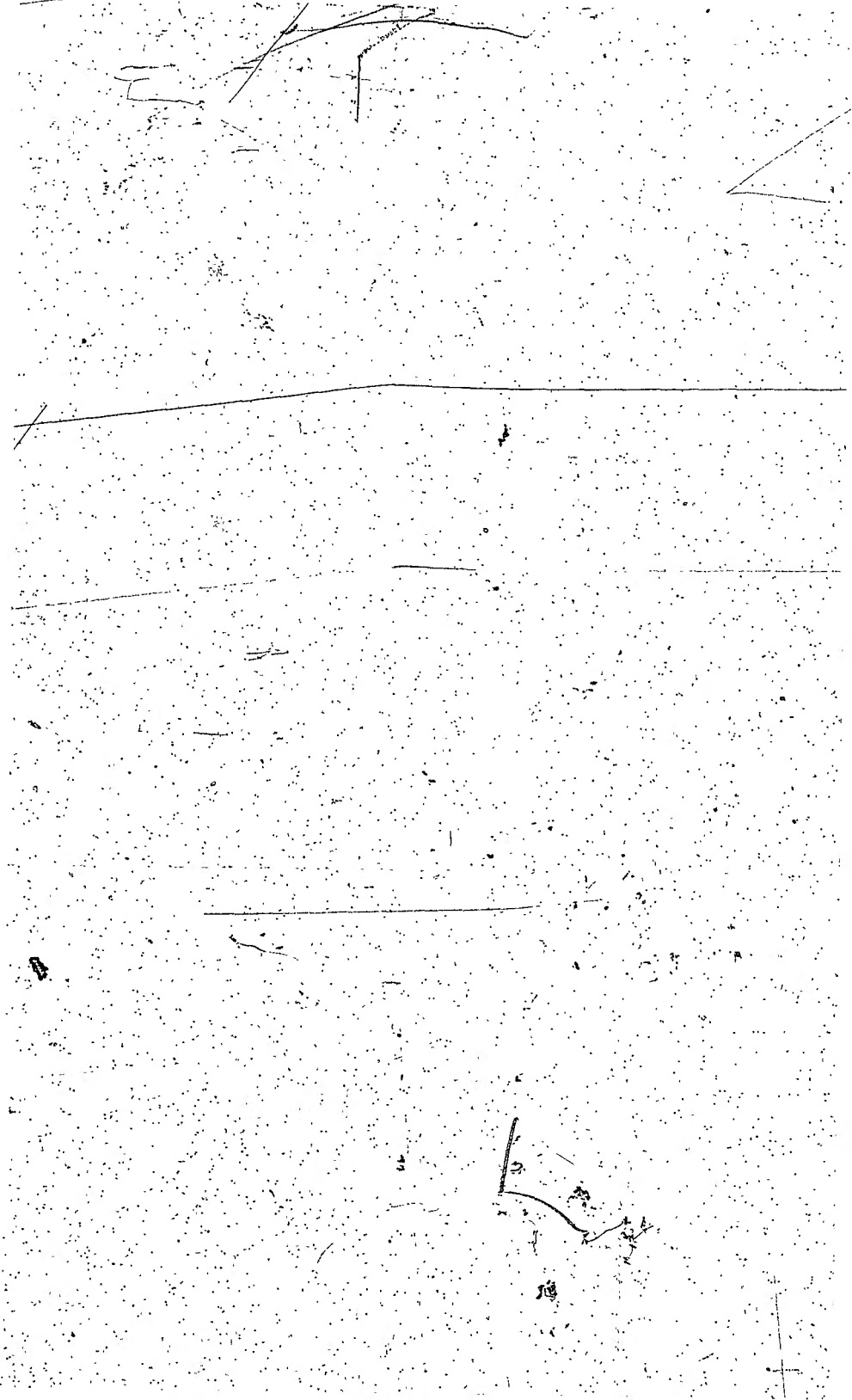
During the continuance of the fierce rivalry which existed between the Hudson Bay and the Northwest companies, the former, that they might cut off the profitable trade which the latter were carrying on with the Indians on the Red River and about the head waters of the Mississippi, established a colony on the former river. This colony furnishes the only instance in which the Company have manifested

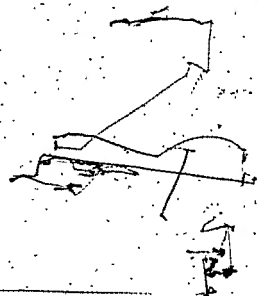
a willingness for the settlement of the country, and this exception to its general policy was for the sole purpose of harrassing a hated rival and driving it from the field. Since the union of the two Companies, no further encouragement has been offered to immigration to this solitary colony; on the contrary the opposite policy has been pursued. Over those who are there the Company exercises an unchecked despotism, nor have complaints submitted by the colonists to the home government been followed by any relief. In every essential of sovereignty it may therefore be said, the Government of Great Britain has surrendered its claims to the country to a commercial corporation whose interests are entirely adverse to its settlement.

There is some prospect that steps will shortly be taken whereby the claim set up by the Hudson Bay Company will be tested as regards a portion at least of the territory. There is an unsettled question touching the boundaries of Canada, which the latter appears disposed to press to an issue. The jurisdiction which France ceded to Great Britain in 1763, it is claimed, included not only the Canadas, but that it extended westward over a large portion of territory now occupied by the Company. This subject is being discussed in some of the Canadian papers, and has excited some attention on the other side of the Atlantic. A writer in the *Montreal Gazette*, before alluded to in this article, is presenting a series of able and interesting papers on this subject, from one of which we quote the following passage:

There can be little doubt that, whenever the objects, and acts of that corporation shall have been thoroughly inquired into and discussed, and have become thoroughly understood, by means of the Press, so unanimous will be the expression of opinion, both in England and Canada, against the Company, that the latter will be made to feel that power which they now apparently despise, and thus have cause to regret that their conduct and pretensions have been such as to arouse the attention of the Press and to obtain, as well as to merit, general condemnation. The English Press is awakening, as well as that of Canada, to a sense of the importance of bringing to an early issue the question of—whether the Hudson's Bay Company shall be permitted, for purely selfish objects, to condemn forever a portion of this continent, as large as the whole of Europe, to the darkest gloom? A question which must soon come before the legislatures of both countries, but which will be decided principally by the action taken upon it here.

We write on this subject in no spirit of national prejudice. The interests of humanity demand a wider and loftier sweep of thought than those of individuals or of nationalities; and those interests require that the giant monopoly which now holds the Northwest in its grasp, be driven out of existence; and the whole country thrown open to settlement. We stop not to inquire whether or not, in the course of human events, a closer bond of sympathy may unite us with the communities which will ultimately be organized there. That is a matter of small importance, compared with the consideration whether communities shall be permitted to grow up there at all or not. Only let Great Britain see to it that this broad field for human enterprise is thrown open to occupation, and then let the future take care of itself. We hope to see this subject agitated until the desired results are obtained.

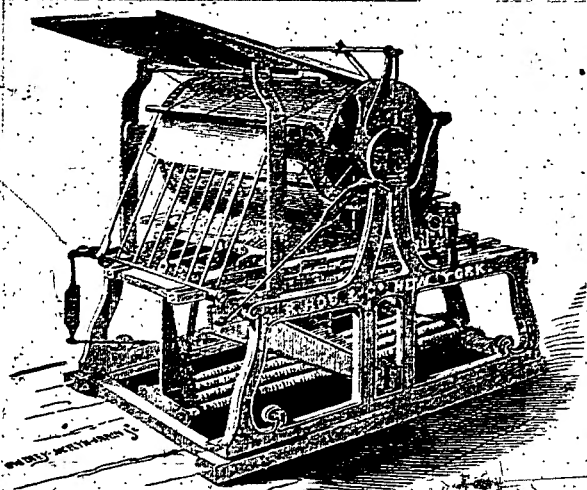




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